

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1081
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USEEC

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SUBJ: EC FOREIGN MINISTERS COUNCIL, JULY 25-26, 1977:

JOINT EUROPEAN TORUS

REF: (A) LONDON 10981; (B) BRUSSELS 6551; (C) BRUSSELS
5771; (D) EC BRUSSELS 3214

1. THE EC FOREIGN MINISTERS FAILED AGAIN IN THE LONG
SEARCH FOR A SITE FOR THE JOINT EUROPEAN TORUS, WHEN
THEY WERE UNABLE TO BRIDGE UK/GERMAN DIFFERENCES DURING
THE JULY 25-26 COUNCIL MEETING.

2. THE JET QUESTION WAS NEVER ACTUALLY DEBATED IN
FORMAL COUNCIL SESSION, AS BELGIAN FOREIGN MINISTER
SIMONET (THE COUNCIL PRESIDENT) CONDUCTED A SERIES OF
FRINGE BILATERALS BEFORE CONCLUDING THAT THERE WAS NOT
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YET ANY HOPE OF COMPROMISE ON THE PART OF EITHER THE
BRITISH (WHO CONTINUE TO INSIST UPON CULHAM) OR THE
GERMANS (WHO FAVOR GARCHING). THE MINISTERS DID AGREE,
HOWEVER, TO THE FOLLOWING SIMONET PROPOSAL: (A) COREPER
IS TO COMPLETE WORK ON TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF THE PROJECT
(SUCH AS PROJECT STATUTES); (B) THE SEPTEMBER 20 FOREIGN
MINISTERS COUNCIL IS TO DECIDE ON A SITE; (C) PROJECT

CONTRACTS AND FUNDING FOR THE CULHAM TEAM ARE TO BE PROLONGED THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30; AND (D) IN THE MEANTIME, SIMONET IS TO PURSUE BILATERAL CONTACTS, PARTICULARLY WITH THE UK AND FRG.

3. BRITISH OFFICIALS MAINTAINED A SOLID FRONT IN DISCUSSIONS WITH REPORTERS. BEFORE THE MEETING, MINISTER OF STATE FRANK JUDD EMPHASIZED THAT THE UK HAS NOT YET RECEIVED A SINGLE MAJOR COMMUNITY PROJECT, WHILE THE FRG HAS THREE SIGNIFICANT EC INSTITUTIONS. RESPONDING TO QUESTIONS REGARDING WHETHER BRITAIN WAS DISPLAYING A "NON-COMMUNITARIAN" SPIRIT IN THIS MATTER, JUDD TURNED THE ARGUMENT AROUND, ASSERTING THAT IF THE OTHER MEMBER STATES WISHED TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THE "COMMUNITARIAN SPIRIT ENCOMPASSES BRITAIN" AND IF THEY DID NOT WISH TO PLAY INTO THE HANDS OF EC CRITICS IN THE UK, THEY SHOULD AWARD THE SITE TO CULHAM. FOREIGN SECRETARY OWEN ADOPTED A DIFFERENT TONE, EMPHASIZING TO REPORTERS THAT CULHAM WAS THE BEST CHOICE FROM THE STANDPOINT OF SCIENTIFIC SUITABILITY. OWEN REFUSED TO CONCEDE THAT THE SITING ISSUE WAS INSOLUBLE BUT DID, DESPITE THE HOPEFUL TONE OF THE COUNCIL AGREEMENT, EXPRESS CONCERN AS TO THE PROSPECTS FOR A DECISION BEING TAKEN IN SEPTEMBER. HE SAID THAT HMG WOULD NEVERTHELESS ENCOURAGE THE CULHAM TEAM OF SCIENTISTS TO AWAIT THE RESULTS OF THE SEPTEMBER MEETING BEFORE MAKING DECISIONS ABOUT THEIR OWN FUTURES.

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4. A NEW ELEMENT WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE JET DEBATE WHEN, ON THE EVE OF THE COUNCIL, THE EC COMMISSION SPOKESMAN RELEASED THE TEXT OF A TELEGRAM FROM THE PROJECT DIRECTOR OF THE PRINCETON UNIVERSITY TOROIDAL FUSION TEST REACTOR (PAUL J. REARDON) TO THE JET PROJECT MANAGER EXPRESSING DISAPPOINTMENT THAT THE JET PROJECT MIGHT BE CANCELLED AND ASKING FOR A LIST OF PERSONNEL WHO MIGHT CONSIDER JOINING U.S. FUSION RESEARCH EFFORTS. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH OWEN, FOR ONE, DENIED TO REPORTERS THAT THIS TELEGRAM WAS RELEVANT TO THE DEBATE, SUCH AN OFFER MUST CLEARLY BE TEMPTING TO JET SCIENTISTS FRUSTRATED BY MONTHS OF POLITICAL POSTURING AND INDECISION. HINTON

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